

SPAIN



MAFCE Mini-Lesson International

**Prepared by Joyce Taylor, Coordinator
Global Education
Missouri 4-H Center for Youth Development
2010-2011 Program Year**

The culture of Spain is a European culture based on a variety of influences. These include the pre-Roman cultures, mainly the Celts and the Iberians cultures. A strong sense of regional identity exists in many regions of Spain. Spaniards are very proud of their heritage and culture. Spain is a democratic parliamentary constitutional monarchy. The Monarch is the head of state and the President of the Government is the head of government. There are multiple parties and free elections. Executive power is vested in the government.

About 79% of Spaniards identify as belonging to the Roman Catholic religion; 2% identify with another religious faith and about 19% as non-religious.

The most important Spanish holiday is “Semana Santa” (Holy Week), celebrated the week before Easter with large parades and other religious events. Spaniards also hold celebrations to honor their local patron saints in churches, cities, towns and villages. The people decorate the streets, build bonfires, set off fireworks and hold large parades, bullfights and beauty contests. One of the best known Spanish celebrations is the festival of “San Fermin”, which is celebrated every year in July in Pamplona. Bulls are released into the streets, while people run ahead of the animals to the bullring.

A significant portion of Spanish cuisine derives from the Roman, Jewish and Arab traditions. The essential ingredient for real Spanish cooking is olive oil, as Spain produces 44% of the world’s olives. However, butter and lard are also important especially in the north.

Daily meals eaten by Spaniards in many areas of the country are still very often made traditionally by hand, from fresh ingredients bought daily from the local markets.

